The usefulness of 360 degree feedback in developing a personal work style

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Abstract. *The present study focuses on a new approach in the process of developing personal work styles, based on the usefulness of 360 degree feedback, taking into consideration the following dimensions: work-life balance, gender-age, self-development and the behavior a person has, following the process of self-development and defining work style. Using different approaches, the study attempts to identify if there are some differences between the evaluations received from the family and the ones from the work environment. All these factors aim at improving personal, but also organizational performances. Based on the current body of the literature, a discussion is made and conclusions are presented.*

Keywords: self-development, life-work balance, 360 degree feedback, works styles, performance.

Introduction

Nowadays, we understand that assessment plays an increasing role in the case of an employee's work environment. Leading companies and the state-owned ones use the 360 degree feedback. This evaluation is based on a complete picture of the employee, which should be seen from multiple perspectives, like the employee's ability to grow, self-motivation and orientation towards performance. The behavior at his/her workplace is another factor in assessing 360 degree feedback, which has a significant influence on productivity, as well as on his/her capacity of reaching his/her set objectives on time. Nowadays, the employees tend to be more self-directed and proactive (Campbell, 2000; Crant, 2000; Grant&Ashford, 2008, Dima and Ghinea, 2016), taking initiative and building social networks. Considering all the above, the hypothesis of this research is the following: the 360-degree feedback performed by family is more favorable than the assessment made by the individual's manager.

Methodology

In order to demonstrate the hypothesis above, we have used in depth research, analyzing what was written until now on this topic. This will help us see the perspectives of other authors and develop ours, taking into account the factor mentioned above.

Discussion

Noticeably different that other more traditional social research methods, evaluations provide a means to assess actions and activities in terms of values, criteria and standards. Because it takes place within a different organizational and political context, evaluation requires group skills, management ability, political dexterity, sensitivity to multiple

stakeholders and other skills that are not as crucial in other social research methods, even though some methodologies might be the same. We will introduce an idea of evaluation, some of the major terms that it comes with and the issues that arise in the field.

Among various contemporary definitions of evaluation, Oxford Dictionary provides the following one: “the making of a judgment about the amount, number, or value of something; assessment”. From the managerial point of view, Business Dictionary summarized assessment as a “rigorous analysis of completed or ongoing activities that determine or support management accountability, effectiveness and efficiency”. Another author draws attention to the concept of performance, defining that performance means both behaviours, as well as results. Performers create behaviours, which in turn will transform performance, from something abstract into something real. Behaviours are not just instruments for achieving results, they are also results by themselves – they are the outcome of the physical and mental efforts paid for fulfilling the tasks - they should be judged separately from results (Brumbach, 1988). In contrast, the evaluation of the employee performance is considered a very time consuming and uphill task in India, for example. Even if the employee evaluation is a difficult process, managers should ensure that employees’ activities and outputs contribute to the organizational goals (Mittal, Goel, & Mohindru, 2009). Having in mind all the definitions previously mentioned, we might say that in our vision, evaluation is a complex process which identifies the value of a specific project, all the work and efforts paid by each employee for fulfilling it. Evaluation takes into account the period of time needed for attaining the project, the actual progress of it, as well as all the resources needed. The evaluation process has to be objective, so that both the employer and the employee have a clear image of the steps to follow, so that we have a coherent professional evolution.

Another author draws attention on what the employee’s evaluations are concerned, emphasizing a practical guide for giving us an accurate picture about assessment. Chandra (2006) considers that most companies often use traditional techniques for evaluation, which are inappropriate, inaccurate or ineffective. Furthermore, the study points out that the manager has a very important role in this process, supervising qualitative and quantitative performance, providing solid arguments for personnel decisions such as promotions, transfers and filling the vacancies. When approaching the issue of ratings, we have noticed that managers avoid giving extreme ratings, because they feel more comfortable giving large numbers of average ratings, showing reluctance in giving many ratings of outstanding or unsatisfactory, even when these ratings are fully deserved. Achieving a perfect bell curve in the evaluation process is not always the best option, especially when a manager seeks to preserve his/her best employees (Chandra, 2006).

The intention of most evaluations is to produce relevant and effective feedback for a large variety of crowds including donors, sponsors, client-groups, administrators and other relevant audiences. If the feedback provided by evaluations has any impact on the following decisions that need to be taken, it is considered valuable and beneficial. An evaluation doesn’t always provide a simple answer to a successful approach, as studies and results affect decision making differently, depending on the projects. Critical evaluations sometimes prove trivial when it comes to short-term decisions and in some cases, studies that initially seem to have no influence can have a delayed impact when more favourable conditions arise. Nevertheless, it is commonly agreed that the main goal of evaluation should be to influence decision-making or policy formulation by providing factual,

empirical feedback. Some authors pointed out that the term of evaluation could be associated with the feedback one, which was described as a key process in the life of an organization. (Bear, Cushenbery, London, & Sherman, 2017). Moreover, the feedback helps workers understand which are the opportunities and the expectation for reward in their workplace (McCauley&Van Velsor, 2004), giving them a chance to improve their performance (Smither et al., 1995). The Johari Window is another model that shows a “disclosure/feedback model of self-awareness”, which is known by some people as an “information processing tool”. The Johari Window is in direct correlation with the experience, views, skills, motivation of the employee and has an impact on his/her evaluation. Taking into consideration all four regions, we can also determine a specific work style. Other authors pointed out that management consulting could be considered as a creation of value for both organizations and employees, by using knowledge and assets for improving organizational performance, being part of the unknown and hidden part of organizational Johari window (Adizes, Cudanov & Rodic 2017).

Depending on the subject that is evaluated and the intention of that evaluation, we distinguish many different types, the most important distinction being that between formative and summative ones. The first type of evaluation mentioned, the formative one, improves and builds up the evaluated object, whereas summative evaluations observe and analyse the conclusion and the effects of the object, describing what happened consequent to delivery of the technology or program, the value of its implementation and the assessment of the personnel, practices, inputs and other organizational context. In contrast, summative evaluations assess the importance that the object had regarding the outcome, determining the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes and estimating the relative costs associated with the object.

The first issue we have approached in this case study is related to the dimension of the work-life balance. More specifically, the relationship between family and work environment is one that may cause such adverse effects like stress, but there are also positive ones such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover and life satisfaction (Frone et al., 1992; Higgins et al, 1992; O'Driscoll et al, 1992; Parasuraman et al, 1989). A lot of traditional companies regard work and personal life as two completely different scopes, sometimes in competition with one another. Some even think that having a successful personal life means not being able to focus enough and therefore, disregarding your professional one and vice-versa. Managers that have a contemporary way of thinking know that it is best to approach the employee-employer relationship differently, aiming for a positive, encouraging attitude. By doing so, both personal and work-related goals are meant to be achieved, with beneficial effects on the business as well as its people. It is very interesting how researchers have been measuring the work-family conflict, taking into account studies that revealed a double conflict: the first one which occurred when work interfered with family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) and the second one when family interfered with work (Duxbury, Higgins, & Mills, 1992; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). The results of this study revealed when work interferes with family there are negatives values for the following outcomes: job satisfaction, life satisfaction and organizational commitment. Taking in consideration what is previously mentioned in relevant published literature, we can safely assume that the relationship between work and family can affect the employee's individual performance. If the employee does not successfully detach himself or herself from private issues, especially family related ones, he or she will be

tented to unfairly balance personal expectations and work duties. In the process, this can negatively affect the performance, leading to frustration, annoyance and anxiety. To avoid this situation and to personally help them, companies have adapted to these needs, offering sports activities. The most frequently taken measures or politics regard the creation of a flexible work schedule and training and assistance services for employees. Social norms regarding femininity and masculinity have shifted drastically in the past thirty years. Work allocation for men and women in the industrial society was strikingly obvious, paid work becoming a priority whereas household work became less important. This gave birth to the 'true femininity cult', the woman's central role being that of a mother that raises and takes care of the infants and also manages and makes sure that the household is in pristine condition. After the Second World War, social norms promoted the main role of a woman as the parent and the man's role as the core provider of material and financial goods in the family. A man's personal value and identity were almost exclusively associated with his professional performance and the consequent money. Traditional norms that identify masculinity with competitiveness, assertiveness and autonomy are associated in the business field with the 'rules of success'.

Another author highlights the relationship between work and family, emphasizing that there are two roles that an employee can have: the home role and the office role. Furthermore, it exemplifies that a woman is good worker, but at the same time, she also plays the roles of wife and mother. Meanwhile, men are also playing the roles of father and head of the family. Sometimes, the job is very demanding and there is a risk of bringing work into personal life, that is home, thus causing an interference in the roles mentioned above and leading to conflicts and reducing the individual performance assessment. In what the aspects presented above are concerned, basically every employee will try to maintain a balance between work life and personal life (Grant-Vallone and Donaldson, 2001). If the balance is equal on both sides, an employee will perform both roles at a satisfactory level. Unfulfilling this balance will have negative effects on home performance, which in turn will affect the company in the long run because the employee does not perform his/her tasks according to his/her set standards (Wisnu, 2016). The results of this study show that the work-family conflict has a negative influence on life satisfaction.

The specialists consider that the employee's performance evaluation could point to another dimension – one which is related to gender and age. Authors like Cleveland and Landy (1981) have been argued that younger employees get lower ratings than those employees who have more experience in the work environment. The results of another study conducted by Griffeth and Bedeian (1989) highlight that there is no much difference in the evaluation between younger employees and the older ones. They point out the idea that performance evaluation is more based on factors such as the ones related to tasks, rather than gender and age.

This study attempts at empirically examine the relationship of successfully reaching self-development, career development and individual performance in setting of information industry. The results of this study have shown that workplace, which include elements of enthusiasm and learning can predict future enhanced performance, self-development and career-growth. The empirical results have revealed that most of the information professionals from libraries are always striving for improving their job-related skills, so that they would reach a superior level in their career. This study provides a contribution to

a better understanding of the professional success phenomenon, by showing the connections between organizational and personal outcomes. Thriving or success is now a highly used concept in positive organizational research and behaviour approaches (Sidra, 2016). If we apply and analyse all above in a present situation, nowadays young people are more and more motivated to learn new things, having a number of platforms, training programmes and formative courses to help them. These are not only broadly available for them, but they also boost professional performance, as well as offer a better perspective for their field. A lot of companies invest in making all these resources not only attractive to interested employees, but with direct results regarding professional performances and work opportunities within a company. Technical abilities and the agility that comes with age help growth and development and are crucial when gaining experience within the field, whereas older employees might find newer approaches more difficult to incorporate. Being professionally accustomed to certain techniques and practices, it is sometimes challenging to adapt to new ones and reticence may be a common feeling among elder members.

Conclusions

Contemporary research reflects several major issues that have been discussed and analyzed by the specialists. Nowadays, researchers admit that job performance is more than just the execution of specific tasks and that it involves a wider array of important organizational activities. Taking into consideration our meta-analysis, we have tried to see the relationship between all those dimensions that give a full picture of the employee's performance, including work-life balance, self-development and behavior. Even if employee's performance evaluation is designed to assess each individual's contribution to the organization, there are 2 types of people who can handle this evaluation: the family and the managers. Family plays an important role in evaluating the employee because it provides a different perspective than the manager has on that particular person. More often, the family provides a much better perception/evaluation than the manager does. This phenomenon occurs because the manager has a limited perspective on the employee, evaluating him/her only in his/her working hours and only on professional grounds. On the other hand, the family has a larger perspective, thus providing the family member with a better feedback, than the one he/she receives from work.

Employee evaluation is a major topic for many Human Resources departments, which will be further developed in the future, so that it will play an important part in self-development and in gaining professional experience.

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